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DONNE

ADDRESS DELIVERED TO
THE MEMBERS OF THE
COLCHESTER LITERARY
INSTITUTION, MARCH
20, 1849

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*... Donne from his father. April. 21
1849.*

A D D R E S S

DELIVERED TO THE MEMBERS

OF THE

COLCHESTER

LITERARY INSTITUTION,

MARCH 20, 1849,

BY

WILLIAM BODHAM DONNE, Esq.,

OF BURY ST. EDMUND'S;

ALSO A

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

AT THE OPENING,

Re-printed from the "Essex Standard" of March 23, 1849.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST, FOR THE INSTITUTION.

COLCHESTER:

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1849.

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ADDRESS.

MR. CHAIRMAN, AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

We are met this evening on an occasion and for a purpose which, for their immediate results, must be considered interesting, and for their probable consequences may be termed important, to all the inhabitants of this town, and to all concerned in its welfare and reputation. For we are assembled to celebrate the birth and introductory acts of an Institution intended to provide instruction and amusement for those whose opportunities of information and relaxation are limited, and for all its members a centre of friendly intercourse or social study—a neutral ground for individual or accidental discrepancies—and a society for mutual aid, encouragement, and improvement. If the members of the Colchester Literary Institution henceforward respond to the hopes and efforts of its projectors and founders, the 20th of March will be an anniversary to which the old will look back with honorable pride and with the sense of benefits received—which the youthful will welcome with honest emulation—and to which successive Committees will appeal with satisfaction at their past exertions, with confidence in future permanence and progress, and with gratitude to all and each of those under whose auspices, and by whose efforts, the foundation stone, so to speak, was laid in 1849.

I am honoured by a request from your Committee to address a few words this evening to the Members of this Institution, explanatory or suggestive of its design, prospects, and present means of carrying out the inten-

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tions of its founders and supporters, in providing this town with an association similar to those possessed by other places superior neither in population nor intelligence to Colchester. It would ill-become me to question the Committee's nomination of myself. No one is more aware that "Sparta has many a better man than he" than the person on whom the Committee's choice has on this occasion fallen. But I am not, therefore, precluded soliciting from my audience such indulgence as they may accord to a perfect stranger to most of them, while, at the same time, I beg all who hear me to be assured that, although a stranger, and "not to the manner born and bred," I feel a warm and friendly interest in the cause which now brings us together, and of which I am the willing, although perhaps incompetent, advocate. I will, however, shelter myself with an injunction borrowed, with a slight change, from our great "Master of sentences"—"Use me after your own honour and dignity; the less I deserve (audience), the more merit is in your (attention)."

I prefer addressing you on such an occasion in the form which I have adopted to perhaps the more usual method of an unpremeditated discourse. But for the fear that by adducing great names I might furnish ground for unfavorable comparisons, I could easily find precedents in similar inaugurations for preferring a written to a spoken address. Yet what has weighed even more with me than precedent is the consideration that I shall thus, at least, prove the remarks I may deem fitting to make to-night to be the fruit of mature reflection, and that I am not discharging the office entrusted to me in a slight or perfunctory manner. I regard myself indeed, for the time, as the organ of your Committee, explaining their views, communicating their arrangements, and promulgating their senti-

ments. *This* address is *their* manifesto in all respects—except its imperfections.

The resolutions already moved and seconded sufficiently acquaint you with the objects for which this Institution is established. It is my office, by showing what societies or individuals have in other cases effected in science or literature, to set before you what may reasonably be expected from yourselves. *Their* performances may, in some respects, be the measure of *your* capabilities. I shall indeed broach no Utopian or imaginary schemes of self-instruction, discipline, or acquirement. This Institution does not aspire to produce learned men or literary works, although it would gladly hail such splendid exceptions and encouraging proofs of its own efficiency. It aspires to something higher—it aims at developing in each of you the native germs of intellect and refinement—at collecting and completing, or at least maturing, such elements of knowledge and thought as were implanted in you ere the business of life superseded the training of the school—at turning increased leisure to good account—at giving a new zest to laudable pleasures—at supplying fresh motives to mental energy—and at bringing you, through the medium of co-operation, into more immediate contact with the intellectual movements of the age. Of those movements I shall speak presently. But here, at the outset, I may remark that the present occasion is not the first in the history of your town on which it has been to its inhabitants and neighbourhood a source and channel of civilisation. Without mooted the question of your original name, the antiquities with which your site and vicinity abound, whether palpable in solid masonry, or disclosed by the plough-share and railway excavations, attest that at this moment, and on this place, we are

standing on the ashes of eighteen centuries—on ground which successively became a camp, a fort, a municipium, and a city, under the most warlike and civilised people of the ancient world. Your High Street has probably echoed to the footsteps of the imperial wanderer Hadrian; and Suetonius, Agricola, or Constantius, may have passed over St. John's Hill, preceded by the scarlet banner and the burnished eagle, and accompanied by the alalagos and loud cheerings of the Roman maniples. Wherever the Roman conquered he inhabited; wherever he inhabited he introduced the speech and the laws of Latium, the manners and the arts of the more civilised south. In the dispensations of Providence it was the Roman's mission to assimilate and make ductile the nations he subdued; and by the outward resemblance he imposed upon races the most remote and dissimilar to prepare a broad and beaten way for the advance and triumph of the Christian faith. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness." Rude may have been the discipline, and reluctantly imbibed the lesson; but they contained germs stronger and more fruitful than any which the Keltic mind, without such extraneous grafting, has ever generated or developed spontaneously. The importance of Colchester as a military station implies its importance also as an instrument in civilising eastern England. Five centuries after the first centurion marked out the original camp on these hills the municipalities of Rome were absorbed in the new territorial arrangements of the Anglo-Saxon invaders. But the name of an adjoining village—*Lex-den*, renders it probable that either this town or that hamlet were the site of a Saxon community, and that the governing, and in that age the civilising, power also still remained near its original centre. I need not remind you that Æthelbert, king of Kent, was an early convert

of Augustine and the Roman missionaries. Saeberth, king of the East Saxons, or Essex, was the son of Æthelbert's sister, and the Christian preachers therefore obtained an easy access to at least the court and royalty of this county.* Now not merely convenience, but habit also, would direct these missionaries—natives of a land where all the life and strength of the nation were collected into cities and towns—to the *towns* in each district; and, both from its ancient renown and its conspicuous site, the town and fortress on the banks of the Colne would attract their earliest notice, and be the centre of their first operations. Ere another century elapsed the winds were unchained, and the vials of desolation were poured forth upon the expiring civilisation of the ancient world. The Church was the ark which wafted the surviving and dismembered elements of learning and the arts over the deluge of barbarism, and over the tumultuous subsidence of the northern tribes in their new conquests. Dwindled to a span, and struggling for bare existence, learning and science hid themselves in cloisters; and the massive ruins of your ecclesiastical and conventual buildings prove, not merely the piety or the penitence of their founders, and the wealth and longevity of the foundations, but also the efficient shelter they yielded to the scholar and the saint. The dark ages closed at length in a milder dawn, and the middle ages merged gradually into the epoch at which the history of modern Europe begins—the epoch of reviving learning, concerted enterprise, geographical discovery, and purer faith. In these successive phases of social and intellectual advancement your town has borne its relative part: it shared in the religious movements of the sixteenth century, in the partly religious,

* *Lappenberg's Hist. of Anglo-Saxons*, vol. i., p. 142.—The Gospel was first preached in Essex, *i.e.* to the East Saxons, A.D. 604. *Lingard's Hist. and Antiq. of the A. S. Church*, i., p. 26.

partly political agitations of the seventeenth. Its streets or churches have echoed to the preaching of more than one Protestant martyr—its soil has been reddened with the blood of loyal and devoted cavaliers. Let it not then be said that in the nineteenth century Colchester stands still unimpressed by, unsympathising with, the intellectual activity which in literature and science, in thought and action, marks the era in which we are living. Rather let this Institution, by its immediate exertions and by its permanent results, be a *proof* that Colchester does not forget its early history—be a *pledge* that it aspires also to transmit a record of the present to the future, to add a link to the continuous annals of eighteen centuries. By zealous co-operation, by unabating industry, by oblivion of minor differences, by emulation of nobler ends, by that local ambition which is to a district what patriotism is to a country, let it come to pass that the 20th of March be marked henceforward as an epoch in your history, as a red-letter-day of commencing and progressing improvement in your municipal calendar.

Many circumstances distinguish the middle of the nineteenth century from preceding periods in the history of the world. The associating principle which leads men to combine for ends of practical convenience and utility was never before so strong or so well organised. The mechanism of society was never before at once so diversified, so efficient, and so generally rapid and easy in its movements. No impenetrable gulfs of ancestry—no impervious barriers of wealth or station, sever, as heretofore, man from man. There is no confusion, at the same time there is no mutual interdiction, between the grades of society. The heir of many quarterings and the self-raised author of his own wealth and name are frequently met with on the same

platform, and embarked in the same cause. A similar change is apparent in literature. Men write no longer for the learned, or the patron, but for the mass; the costly quarto is shrunk into the commodious volume that may be borne in the hand or the pocket; the well-informed student is not banished from the cloister, but he is as frequently to be found in the railway carriage or the coffee and club room. Periods like that of the Religious Reformation in the sixteenth century, like the reign of Elizabeth, or the Revolution of 1640, may in their collision and fervour have produced greater—at least more conspicuous, men than any among our contemporaries. The heat of the furnace tries the temper of the gold; yet we are all more or less prone to estimate the past liberally, the present grudgingly and with suspicion. Be this as it may, it is not the less certain that, in general anxiety for the improvement and instruction of the masses, no age has advanced so far as the present. The man who should now gravely affirm that reading and writing ought to be restricted to the middle and upper classes—that knowledge is fraught with peril and ignorance with safety, would not be listened to, and most probably be deemed an out-patient of St. Luke's. We have not only arrived at the consciousness of the fact, but we have begun to embody it in action, that social evils derive their root and succulence, their barb and venom, from ignorance: their antidotes and preventives from knowledge. Knowledge indeed cannot do all things: he that imagines it can is possessed only of the knowledge that puffeth up. For perfect health of intellect a nobler and purer medicine is needed; but ignorance can *mar* all things: and, in nothing does it mar them more than by obstructing our healthier and better desires and instincts—by the dullness of mind which it fosters—by the insensibility to the true, the beauti-

ful, and the good, which it engenders and entails. In the old allegory by which our forefathers delighted to symbolize the strife between "*old and new lore, or truth*"—that is, between the light of the Gospel and the traditions of men, Ignorance was arraigned as a culprit, and visited with condign punishment. Ignorance is still at the bar, arrested on the same charge and awaiting a similar doom. It concerns you, myself, and every man, to testify against him, to break his yoke from our necks, and to cast his cords from our hands. But as the ancients represented their fate or destiny as one form under many names, so is ignorance really no single form, but a composition and amalgam of many evils, like the fiends that haunt poor Tom, in *Lear*—some external, some inward and proper to its victims. Some men are kept ignorant by circumstances. Of this we have recently had ample and saddening proof in the evidence collected by Lord Ashley at his interview with the outcasts of society at the Ragged School. On their examination, the deponents said, with bitter retrospect and yet more bitter prospective conviction, that they had become such, for the most part, because they had none to care for, none to teach them; and therefore they retaliated upon society, which discarded them, violence, and wrong, and corruption—

" Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
 Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll ;
 Chill penury repress their noble rage,
 And froze the genial current of the soul."

Upon these, and upon such as these, ignorance presses with a weight heavier than ever *Ætna* pressed upon its fabled giants, and plunges them in abysses deeper than ever plummet sounded. But of such is not now the question: we must compassionate them and pass on. Ignorance afflicts others—it may be

ourselves, individually and internally in our temperaments, characters, and understandings. It woos us to self-indulgence—it soothes with vanity—it reconciles us to imperfect performances, neglected opportunities, and slighted duties—it palliates procrastination—it enervates by caprice and variety of pursuit—it promises that some uncertain to-morrow will make up for the deficiencies of to-day—its whispers lull like distant billows and relax like noon-day heat—it preaches peace where there is no peace, and counsels to folding of the hands and to slumber. For wisest purposes the Creator has distributed wealth and power and station in unequal degrees. But to every man in every rank of life he has given a *Mind* capable of cultivation, expansion, and elevation; has imposed it as a duty on every man to embrace every occasion of self-improvement; and on all who have means, talents, and leisure, the further duty of lifting the load of circumstances from those who have them not or have them scantily, and of aiding them to awaken and cherish those intellectual powers which accident—not birth, has repressed in them. Our age is, with every succeeding year, acknowledging those duties and responsibilities more and more. The existence of this Institution, and the steps already taken to ensure its growth and permanence, show that your Committee and its supporters recognise them. It remains for you, for whose sakes especially this Institution is henceforth established, to manifest that you also are prepared to move with the age, and to second the exertions of your founders; to appropriate to yourselves and to transmit to others the opportunities and advantages which commence from this evening under such favourable auspices and with such show of promise.

I would, however, by no means imply that this In-

stitution is intended or applicable for such persons only as, from imperfect opportunities, or engrossing daily avocations, are experiencing the evils of an inefficient or interrupted education. Such an object would indeed be most timely and useful ; but your Committee has in view a much wider range of utility and operation. It contemplates the benefit of all its members ; it would deal with the many as well as with the few ; and, for my own part, I unhesitatingly avow my belief that Institutions like the present impart to the most instructed members little less profit than to the comparatively ignorant and illiterate. I believe, on grounds both of reason and experience, that he who can teach others does, by the very act of teaching, analyze, probe, strengthen, and steady his own previous knowledge ; and, by being thus brought in contact with many men and many minds, deepens his own insight and widens his horizon in the first of sciences—*Self-knowledge*. St. Augustin tells a story of a man who, when asked “What is time ?” replied, “I thought I knew till you asked me ;” and if we examine much of what we *think* we know, and talk about as known, we shall often find ourselves in the like case. But when a man undertakes to instruct another he discovers either his own knowledge or his own ignorance. In the one case he can define, explain, and illustrate : his thoughts are coherent, his language is ready and clear. Even in this instance, however, the teacher may have taken only a partial or conventional view of the question ; and his pupil for the time, by an abrupt query, an original remark, or a novel comparison, may prove to him that he knew only in part. On the other hand, if the knowledge of the informant be inaccurate and superficial, his attempt to teach demonstrates his need to learn : his ideas are vague ; his analogies inapposite ; his language vacillating. In both these cases of partial or superficial knowledge a society

of this kind is of infinite value. By conversation, discussion, or writing, it affords the means of completing the defect and supplying the void ; it has some of the recommendations of scholastic discipline, without the irksomeness of scholastic restraint. Again, without supposing ignorance or prejudice in either case, we have a second direct motive for re-unions of men of various callings and pursuits. Our social system is at once complicate in its operations, and simple in its elements. Enterprise produces wealth ; wealth stimulates refinement and luxury : these, in turn, lead to varieties of occupation, and introduce innumerable details into the field of invention and industry ; but with this complexity is combined a principle of union. No trade is wholly independent of any other, or rather of several other, trades ; no profession can say to another profession " I have no need of you." Rather do all reciprocally stand in need one of another, and draw from common, or at least cognate, sources of knowledge. I would not adduce what is so obvious were it not for the application ; for, inasmuch as each artisan, each member of a profession, has some peculiar process, some technical forms and symbols, whereby his art and mystery is distinguished and kept apart from other arts and mysteries, and yet at the same time has something in common with many, or with all, of them ; so, by reason of his *severalty*, he is enabled to communicate special instruction, and by reason of his *commonalty* he is able to receive special instruction ; and the Institution is the neutral ground on which his knowledge and his ignorance may meet and be reconciled. I am persuaded that many of the differences that keep man apart from man in the world arise from the imperfect relations and correspondences of the grades of society. We sit still and imagine unfitness and disharmony ; we are shy or supercilious because we are unacquainted. Even in

the short time allotted me this evening I may, perhaps, inform one or more of you of a fact, an idea, or an opinion, for the first time, or place in a new point of view some truth or circumstance of which, from its seeming obviousness, you have hitherto taken imperfect heed. Much more am I assured that there is not a person in this room who, if our acquaintance were improved, could not tell me something of which I am now ignorant, and for lack of such intercourse may always remain so. It was a maxim of the late Sir Walter Scott that every man was worth talking with, since from every man something might be learned; and he once reproved one of his family for travelling many miles in a stage-coach without attempting to converse with his single fellow-passenger. "Why," was the reply, "the man was only a glover, and what *could* I learn from him?" "Much," said Sir Walter; "you know nothing of glove-making, and he could have taught you how to cut out the fingers and supple the leather; and even had you not learned that you would have made the man feel friendly to you ere you parted." It is recorded of Burke that he was mistaken on the same day, and by regular professors of the several arts, for a chemist, a grazier, and a veterinary surgeon, and complimented for his proficiency in each of these departments. Without recommending you to aspire to such universal knowledge, I would yet impress upon you all the opportunity which this Institution affords for enlarging and confirming your acquaintance with a variety of subjects, scientific and literary, practical and theoretical. Such exercise of the memory and the understanding is really less burdensome, and infinitely more profitable to both, than dissipating the forces of each with unconnected details or listless vacuity. Such an exercise not only redeems the present hour, but lays up materials for reflection, and perhaps for practical utility, hereafter.

I have spoken of the external differences of men as respects station and occupation, as differences which, by means of this and similar Institutions, may be reconciled and brought to act beneficially on one another. I hesitate in proceeding to touch upon their differences of opinion. Not that I am under any temptation to infringe upon the Canon Law of your Society, which so wisely excludes religious and political discussion—I am always too glad to shun those inclement and tempestuous regions. But a man's circumstances are seldom of his own seeking, or under his own control entirely; and so he the less regards allusion to them; whereas his opinions are, or at least seem to be, his own choice; and we are all sufficiently jealous of questionings of our judgment. I tread, however, upon this debateable ground merely for the purpose of showing how beneficial in this respect also Literary Institutions may be rendered. Nothing is less conducive to the discovery of truth, or indeed to healthy discipline of the mind, than a habit of accepting opinions because of the persons who hold them, or of idolizing persons because of the opinions which they hold. Now, such a habit may be insensibly acquired, without wilfully nurturing prejudice or clinging to error, by daily hearing opinions discussed or facts stated by the same persons in the same circles. Coleridge, describing a review which he saw at Naples, where a Russian and an English regiment were drawn up together in the same square, remarks that in the Russian regiment there was but one face, while in the English every soldier had a face of his own.* A society broken up into sets, and moving in separate and not concentric circles, is very apt to acquire this *Russian* physiognomy of mind. For this inconvenience your Society offers the readiest and most effectual cure. I would rather see it anything almost

* *The Friend*. Vol. iii., p. 264, 4th edition.

than merely a Debating Society ; but free and general discussion need not be precluded because of a possible danger—a danger which it is always in the power of your Committee to obviate. And a general and free discussion of literary, moral, or practical subjects has these results. It presupposes research, reflection, accuracy ; by involving comparison with others it suggests a just confidence, or, it may be, a juster humility, in ourselves ; it enables the well-informed member, at little cost of time or trouble—or rather I should say with the alacrity of a refined and ingenuous nature, to impart intellectual boons to his younger or less-favoured colleagues. Many a docile and inquiring spirit, which would shrink from asking information of strangers, may, within these walls, by the indirect process of conversation or the medium of classes and lectures, gain, without a blush or scruple, the knowledge which he seeks. Many a prejudice will vanish, when confronted by better reasons and sounder information ; many a tie may be formed between parties who, but for this Institution, might have continued strangers to each other ; and talents, which for want of opportunity and encouragement, were unknown to his co-mates and unsuspected even by the owner, may, by its means and mechanism, be genially developed and discreetly directed. A Literary Institution, in short, combines the two polar forces of social action—localisation and centralisation. The individual character is not discouraged or repressed by any harsh or unseasonable discipline ; the generic types and qualities of mind are attracted to common intellectual centres ; the complacency which in the one is misplaced is justifiable and honourable in the many ; it is no longer a selfish egotism, but a laudable pride—an *esprit de corps*—in the reputation, growth, and prosperity of their Society.

These general advantages then may be expected from the Institution founded this evening—mutual improvement, well-regulated pursuits, harmless relaxation, the cultivation of kindly feelings and reciprocal respect, increased interest in the intellectual movements of the age, and a natural and laudable pride in the welfare and reputation of your institution.

And here, perhaps, I might most properly close the remarks which I have been called upon to make this evening, since I have now, however imperfectly, set before you what the Institution proposes to effect for its members. Yet I would willingly, if it may be done without weariness to my audience, address a few words to those who may be called the *pupils* of this Society; to all indeed—and I trust I am speaking to a large majority—who purpose to avail themselves of the opportunities henceforth afforded them for acquiring useful knowledge.

I will suppose myself to be addressing a variety of persons of different ages, dispositions, and acquirements, but all of whom are agreed in a common object—the improvement of whatever has been left incomplete in their earlier education. You are not going to school again; but, with a manly and resolved will, intend to follow certain literary or scientific pursuits during the increased leisure which either early closing or other circumstances may afford.

In the first place I would impress upon you the infinite worth and divisibility of time—time, the estate to which every man is born, and which few cultivate to the highest profit; and likewise how much really valuable knowledge may be acquired in the intervals redeemed from indolence, and from what are often called

“spare moments.” Great deeds, both in the intellectual and practical world, have, for the most part, been achieved by men of many and engrossing occupations, not by men with time on their hands and leisure at command. I think it is Cecil who thus illustrates the importance of economy to charity. A lady of his congregation, whose means were known to be very limited, was, notwithstanding, among the foremost and most liberal contributors on all occasions of private or public benevolence. It puzzled Cecil to account for her restricted resources and her large donations. The mystery was thus explained—“Whenever,” said the lady, “I am tempted to lay out money on my personal wants or wishes, I am apt to say at first, ‘*Tis but* so much, and ‘*Tis but* for this once.’ But generally on second thoughts I find I can dispense with, or at least defer, the need or the wish; and the sums thus immediately saved I put into a box for charitable uses. I call this my ‘*Tis but* box.’” “Madam,” rejoined Cecil, “you invest your money more advantageously than any one I ever heard of.” This good lady’s practice may, with nearly equal ease, be applied to the management of time. We may postpone or dispense with an amusement or an indulgence, and invest them in some useful study. The sterner duties of profession or business absorb the *hours* of most of us; yet even the busiest man has some intervals of leisure, which may be by all, because they have been by many, turned to account. There are few employments for which unremitting attention is more needful than that of a banker’s clerk. Perhaps the most laborious student of modern times, and one of the most voluminous writers, was during many of his best years a banker’s clerk: and, although selected by the firm he served to perform the most complex calculations, he yet found time to master nearly the whole circle of ancient philosophy. I am speaking of Thomas

Taylor, who, for his rare and profound acquirements, was surnamed *the Platonist*. Subsequently he exchanged these labours for others little less engrossing, although more congenial to his studies and inclinations. He became a schoolmaster, and also filled, for many years, the office of assistant secretary to the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce. The number of works which Taylor composed, translated, annotated, or edited, amounts to 50 volumes of various sizes; and to these should be added his contributions to scientific and classical journals. I do not insist upon the abstruse and difficult nature of their contents; I will merely direct your attention to the mere amount of manual labour required to produce and publish 25 volumes in 4to., 20 in 8vo., and 5 in 12mo.; and to the husbandry of time and systematic assiduity which they imply. For these works, embracing the most subtle problems in mathematics and metaphysics, were composed, not “in the shelter of academic bowers,” but in the midst of occupations needful for his daily bread. Another example of the compatibility of extensive learning and engrossing employment—of the possibility of “the diligent hand to make rich” both mind and body, is seen in the career of James Watt, who, above all his contemporaries, contributed to raise England to her present station in practical science. James Watt (whose improvement upon the steam engine, for its effects upon civilization, has no rival except the invention of printing) was originally a mathematical instrument maker. So far his work was in unison with his genius. But although Watt had not the preliminary difficulties of Taylor to struggle with, he had a peculiar, and to most men an invincible, obstacle to exertion. Much of his time was passed in sickness. I need not advert to Watt’s scientific labours. Our railways, factories, printing-offices and breweries, the

most arduous efforts and the most delicate processes of art, attest their worth and their variety. Of Watt's steam-engine—for his improvements are tantamount to invention—it has been finely and truly said that “the trunk of an elephant, which can pick up a pin or rend an oak, is as nothing to it. The steam-engine can engrave a seal, and crush masses of obdurate metal like wax before it; draw out, without breaking, a thread as fine as gossamer, and lift a ship of war like a bubble in the air. It can embroider muslin and forge anchors; cut steel into ribbands, and impel loaded vessels against the fury of the winds and waves.” Watt, the most actively inventive, perhaps the most incessantly occupied, man of his time, was also one of the best informed in literature, languages, and philosophy. I will read a character of him, drawn by one who was well qualified to estimate him:—*

“Independently of his great attainments in mechanics, Mr. Watt was an extraordinary, and in many respects a wonderful, man. Perhaps no individual in his age possessed so much and such varied and exact information—had read so much, or remembered what he had read so accurately and well. His stores of miscellaneous knowledge were immense, and yet less astonishing than the command he had at all times over them. Nor was this promptitude and compass of knowledge confined in any degree to the studies connected with his ordinary pursuits. That he should have been minutely and extensively skilled in chemistry and the arts, and in most of the branches of physical science, might perhaps have been conjectured; but it could not have been inferred, from his usual occupations, and probably is not generally known, that he was curiously learned in many branches of antiquity, metaphysics, medicine, and etymology, and perfectly at home in all the details of architecture, music, and law. He was well acquainted, too, with most of the modern languages, and familiar with their most recent literature. Nor was it at all extraordinary to hear the great mechanician and engineer detailing and expounding, for hours together, the metaphysical theories of the German logicians, or criticising the measures or the matter of the German poetry.”

* Lord Jeffrey. Contributions to the Edinburgh Review, iii. p. 693.

The genius of Watt was his own—his mark and token by which Providence distinguished him from other men. But his example is ours, if we will apply it; and it is only from observing and emulating the practice of those who have risen by their own exertions, and employed their talents to the best uses, that we can measure the results of well-directed industry. The genius, indeed, of men like Taylor and Watt renders them, for the many, exceptional cases. But the energy, the self-denial, and the sense of duty, which enabled them to rescue even the pauses of labour from the grasp of indolence or frivolity are of general application, and demand not genius, but earnestness of principle and purpose. I have taken some pains in making a list of men who, engaged in manual occupations, or in professions not immediately connected with literature, have, by means of their acquirements, left some memory of themselves with posterity. I will mention a few of them. I shall select for the present purpose those rather who have borne up against adverse circumstances, and cultivated knowledge under discouragement, than such as have immortalized themselves by brilliant achievements of mind, or by enduring triumphs over matter—examples, in short, which we may apply, not exceptions which we must admire from afar.

1. The trade of shoe-making has been singularly fertile in learned and literary men : Hans Sachs, of Nuremberg, a contemporary of Luther, and who published five folio volumes of verse, and left in manuscript nearly as many more, and who, notwithstanding, boasted that he never made a shoe the less, but reared up virtuously a numerous family by the labour of his hands ; Jacob Boehme, whose writings extend to six quarto volumes, and whose metaphysical genius ob-

tained the praise of Coleridge ; Holcroft, whose comedy of the *Road to Ruin* still retains possession of the stage, while his political writings are forgotten ; Robert Bloomfield, author of the *Farmer's Boy* ; and Gifford, who established and long conducted the *Quarterly Review*, and whose excellence as a Latin and English scholar is attested by his translation of Juvenal, and his editions of the *English Dramatic Poets*, were all of this craft. 2. Learned or literary tailors have been even more numerous. Of this fraternity were Stow and Speed, the antiquaries ; Hill and Wild, who, in the midst of penury and privation, attained to eminence as classical and oriental scholars ; Ballard, a distinguished Anglo-Saxon scholar of the 17th century ; Jean Henri Lambert, a celebrated French mathematician ; Gelli, President of the Florentine Academy ; and Winkelman, one of the most distinguished writers on classical antiquity and art. Thos. Simpson, one of the most lucid of modern geometricians, was born a weaver, and died a Fellow of the Royal Society ; Edmund Stone, another self-educated mathematician, and also a Fellow of the Royal Society, was a gardener. One remark of his is so well worth remembering, and so apt to our present purpose, that I cannot pass it over in silence : when asked how he came by his mathematical knowledge, Stone replied—" A servant taught me, ten years since, to read. Does one need to know anything more than the twenty-four letters in order to learn everything that one wishes ?" Isaac Walton was a linen-draper ; Opie, the painter, a carpenter ; Ben Jonson, a bricklayer ; Arkwright, who first raised the cotton manufacture to its present position, was a barber ; Linnæus, the founder of the science of Botany, was originally a shoemaker's apprentice ; Ferguson, the astronomer and mechanist, and Alexander Murray, the linguist, were shepherd's boys ; John Hunter, the great

surgeon, began life with cabinet-making ; Franklin with printing ; and I need not tell you that Elihu Burritt was, and I believe *is*, when he is at home, a blacksmith. It were easy to proceed with this catalogue—it were easy to show you that neither circumstances, as in the above examples, nor physical disqualifications, such as the blindness of Milton, the lameness of Flaxman, or the deafness of Beethoven, have deterred the earnest student from self-cultivation, or debarred him from eminence. But your patience would be exhausted ere I were half through my list : enough has been cited to prove that whoso *will* does generally vanquish circumstances ; that poverty, business, imperfect opportunities, whether as respects teachers or whether as respects books, are no invincible barriers to knowledge. The members of literary institutions have, however, these preliminary obstacles, for the most part, removed for them. Your classes, your library, your occasional lectures, your customary intercourse with each other, would have been welcomed by the above-mentioned students as boons beyond price—as all sufficient for teaching them whatever they desired to know. Shall they, then, with all their drawbacks, have reared so many trophies on the field of knowledge, and will you, with all your facilities, erect none ?

Next to zeal for the acquisition of knowledge, allow me to impress upon you the value of mental discipline, of method in reading and observation ; in a word, of well-regulated habits of mind. There is intellectual as well as sensual dissipation, and both equally unstring and enervate the moral being and the sinews of manly character. A man of few books is proverbially a formidable antagonist in all cases wherein accuracy of statement and strength of argument are required. His literary means are not “ in supposition ;” his intellectual “ ventures are not squandered abroad.” One

might read through whole circulating libraries without advancing a step in real knowledge. The human understanding has been compared to a blank sheet of paper, ready to receive, but originally void of, impressions. The comparison would perhaps be more accurate if applied to the memory. Now, if a sheet of paper be covered with geometrical figures, or a map, or a poem, it will convey a clear conception to the reader of one or other of these objects respectively. But if all these be scrawled indiscriminately on the same sheet, they perplex and probably obliterate each other. The mind of a desultory unmethodical reader resembles the scrawled paper : it imbibes partially, it retains inaccurately, it represents erroneously, whatever is committed to its care. When the Kaleidoscope was first invented, it was thought likely to prove a useful auxiliary to the art of design in suggesting, by accidental collocations of form and colour, more ingenious and happy devices than study and rules supplied. But the patterns of the Kaleidoscope proved too arbitrary for the order and harmony which grace and even usefulness demand, and, accordingly, the tube, with its shifting incoherencies, has continued to be a child's toy. The wandering mind is little better than a Kaleidoscope : shadows of thought pass over it, glimpses of meaning flash upon it ; but the shadow and the glimpse are as unsubstantial and fleeting as the clouds upon a hill side, or the bubbles on a running stream. The perception of this truth has led all founders of systematic education, from the colleges of " Babylon and great Al-Cairo " downwards, to insist upon method as the key of knowledge. The classes of your Institution, the shelves of your library, and the visits of your lecturers, will afford you opportunities of acquiring a variety of information. The cheapness of books in our day will conduce greatly to the same end. But beware of yielding to a sickly appetite for variety :

it is but indolence in disguise. Apply to study the counsel which Shakspeare gives for the choice of friends—

“ The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel :
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatcht, unfledged comrade.”

Ponder well in choosing the subject to which you will specially apply ; but, having once made your election, abide by it, even if its results disappoint you at first. The difficulties of knowledge are at the beginning of the ascent. But he who turns back from one set of difficulties, in the vain hope that the adjoining path will be greener and smoother, not only loses his previous labour, but in a measure unfits himself for future exertion. He fares like the Pilgrims in Bunyan's Allegory, who, because the way from the river was rough, and their feet tender by reason of travel, were much discouraged, and went over the stile ~~into~~ *“Bye-path Meadow ;”* and at first “ they found it easy for their feet,” but, after a while, they “ were caught trespassing on Giant Despair's grounds,” and had much ado to get out of them again.*

I have now laid before you, to the best of my ability, although far beneath my wishes, the objects for which this Institution is established, and some of the means by which you may best avail yourselves of its advantages. I should, however, discharge my duty to the Committee very imperfectly were I to omit the reminding you that knowledge and mental discipline are, even in their best and highest forms, but instruments to higher and better ends. Learning is not, by itself, knowledge ; neither is knowledge wisdom. They are sometimes

* *Pilgrim's Progress*. Part i, p. 145, *Southey's Edition*.

even at variance with one another. It has been well said that

“ Many books are wearisome : who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
Deep versed in books, and shallow in himself.” †

And, on the other hand, there is “ a knowledge which puffeth up,” without edifying, that is, without building up and instructing the inner man. Learning and knowledge, indeed, resemble the ingredients in an alchemist’s crucible. There may be the pure carbon—the diamond ; and there may be silver three-times refined : but another process is needed to convert even these precious elements into the final gold. The secret which the alchemist could not attain, religious principle supplies. It purges off the dross of earthy and selfish desires ; it clarifies and corroborates our purer and nobler aspirations ; it recasts knowledge into its primal moulds, and reproduces it with the mintage and superscription of Wisdom. Well says “ the Divine Du Bartas ” in the version of smooth and sonorous Joshua Sylvester—

“ Wisdom—————

Is God’s own mirror ; she’s a light whose glance
Springs from the lightening of his countenance.
She’s mildest Heaven’s most sacred influence ;
Never decays her beauties’ excellence,
Aye, like herself ; and she doth always trace,
Not only the same path, but the same pace.
Without her, honour, health, and wealth, would prove
Three poisons to me. Wisdom from above
Is the only moderatrix, spring, and guide,
Organ and honour, of all gifts beside.”

And now, Mr. Chairman, and Ladies and Gentle-

† *Paradise Regained.* B. iv.

men, by your sufferance, and in compliance with the request of your Committee, I have discharged the task which I undertook ; and it only remains for me to thank you for this patient hearing, which I attribute to your approval of the important and interesting object which has brought us together this evening.

OPENING OF THE COLCHESTER LITERARY INSTITUTION.

(Re-printed from the "Essex Standard" of March 23, 1849.)

The above important Institution, projected during the past year and taken up with considerable spirit by a large number of the inhabitants of Colchester, was opened on Tuesday evening, March 20th, by a public meeting on the Society's premises, St. John's Street.

The spacious lecture-room, which was crowded in every part, was admirably fitted up for the occasion. Two handsome bronze chandeliers, each having four burners, afforded a most brilliant light; the arch above the platform was tastefully wreathed with foliage; and every available niche or projection round the apartment was occupied by beautiful hot-house plants, kindly furnished by Mr. B. R. Cant, florist, of the same street.

The company included a large number of ladies.

CHARLES GRAY ROUND, Esq., occupied the chair; and among his supporters on the platform we noticed Sir. G. H. Smyth, Bart., M.P.; C. H. Hawkins, Esq., Mayor; Geo. Round, Esq.; John Bawtree, Esq.; T. J. Turner, Esq.; S. G. Cooke, Esq.; Rev. S. Carr, Rev. J. Papillon, Rev. J. W. Morgan, Rev. W. M. Tucker, Rev. L. W. Owen, Rev. F. Curtis, Rev. G. R. Medley, Rev. W. Y. Smythies, Rev. J. B. Storry, (Gt. Tey), Rev. W. Wilson, (Elmstead), Rev. C. W. Green, (Nayland), Rev. H. Herring, (Fordham), Rev. J. H. Dewhurst, (Layer), Rev. J. J. Holroyd, (Abberton), Rev. Barton Lodge, J. P. Osborne, Esq.; F. Smythies, Esq.; W. Bolton Smith, Esq.; J. Bawtree, jun., Esq.; Dr. Williams; Dr. Duncan; H. G. Deane, Esq.; Sayers Turner, Esq.; A. L. Laing, Esq.; R. S. Nunn, Esq.; L. Brock, Esq.; J. Brown, Esq. (Stanway); T. H. Fenn, Esq. (Nayland); Joseph Cooke, Esq., &c.

The CHAIRMAN, in opening the proceedings, said he must in the very first instance express his thanks and acknowledgements to those gentlemen who had formed and organized this institution, and who had with the greatest pains settled and matured its rules. He tendered them also his most respectful, sincere, and cordial congratulations upon the success of their labours, and upon being at length enabled to say that the institution was open for the benefit of those for whom it was intended. (Applause.) He thought the gentlemen of the committee must be much pleased with the spectacle at that moment before them, presenting so many appearances of what was most bright and fair; and he trusted they might accept it as a happy augury of the future success and prosperity of the institution. (Applause.) Of this he was quite confident—that in the diffusion of sound knowledge—in the exercise and cultivation of good taste—in all that tended to soften and adorn humanity—

“To raise the genius and mend the heart,”

none took a greater delight, or had a deeper interest than the ladies. (Applause.) He was persuaded the committee must long have been of opinion that such an institution was needed in the town; the Castle Society, with its collection of ancient books, improved by additions of modern literature, very judiciously made, although the basis of its foundation might be somewhat enlarged, yet could by no possibility be so extended as to include all those objects and persons whom it was now desired to embrace. In the year 1820 a society was formed in Colchester for the promotion of literary and scientific pursuits; and its professed primary objects were the acquisition and communication of knowledge. There still existed in the town, at no very great distance from the place in which they were assembled, another institution, highly flourishing, and respectably supported, the objects of which professed to be “the instruction of its members in the various branches of science and useful knowledge; moral improvement, by combining useful knowledge with enjoyment; rational amusement, and cultivation of taste.” There were none he was quite sure who would not readily admit that these were in themselves pleasing and commendable objects—most unobjectionable and useful as far as they went; but he was also very much deceived if there were not many of the opinion that there was something still wanting—something that might be supplied, and that ought to be supplied; it might seem to them that the superstructure was

goodly, but that a solid foundation was not to be found. (Hear, and applause.) He was persuaded they were all of opinion that useful learning ought not be disunited from true religion; and that an opportunity ought to be afforded to the young men of Colchester of acquiring scientific and other useful information on various subjects, under the sanction of religion. (Hear, hear.) The founders of this institution had studiously courted the co-operation and the support of the clergy; and he thought there could be no question that they had done right in so doing, and that this circumstance afforded the best proof of the respectability of the institution and the best guarantee for its stability. (Applause.) That co-operation, he conceived, had not been invited merely on account of the station and character of the Clergy—their learned education and their acquirements in knowledge—but because they wished to afford the best proof they could to themselves and to their neighbours that they would suffer nothing here to be read or taught which should derogate in any way from the authority of that Book of books from which they took their rule in life and their hope in death, and which formed the ground-work and the text book of all religious teaching. (Much applause.) Now, by doing this, was any obstacle thrown in the way of scientific enquiry or literary speculation? he conceived none whatever; on the contrary, they merely introduced a wholesome and legitimate check on what was wrong. (Hear, hear.) This opinion was so clearly and eloquently stated by a living writer, for whose works and character he had the greatest esteem—it was so simply put, and so eloquently argued, that he was sure the meeting would forgive him if he brought a short passage under their notice:—

“The human intellect is still a sort of paradise. Its extent is wide as the created universe: within its grasp is everything that is pleasant to the sight and good for wholesome food. The sun and the moon shining in their courses; the earth in all its beauty; the sea with all its wonders; every art and every science that can adorn or benefit life; every detailed branch of morals or of politics; every lofty flight of poetry; everything, in short, that imagination can devise, or research into treasures inexhaustible discover—all are open to its power. From all these sources flows a stream to water the garden, parting itself not into four, but into innumerable heads. But there is still a tree of which it may not taste; there is some one spiritual temptation to be resisted or overcome; there is one restriction. We say to him who is entrusted as the lord of this extensive sovereignty—‘All these things are thine; but only take heed that thou be not wise against thy Maker. When thou comest to suspect concerning Him, be sure that thou art fallen into thy

time of trial. Be not thou rebellious, like to that rebellious house, which fell from heaven. There is but *one* thing *here* demanded of thee. Take that when thou shalt find it, in humility; digest it in faith; and it shall turn within thy taste as honey for sweetness."—*Miller's Bampton Lectures*, p. 87.

This passage was no doubt familiar to many of his reverend friends around him, and he had quoted it as an illustration of one of the fundamental principles of the institution. (Applause.) He confessed he had always been of opinion that among the many blessings showered down upon this country the pureness of its literature and its freedom from the suspicion of infidelity was one of its highest honours and greatest blessings. (Hear, hear.) He was afraid it must be admitted that their historical literature was rather an exception to this rule: he made the admission with reluctance, but he was afraid it was truly made; still he thought they had, as a people, much to be thankful for in this respect: the countrymen of Bacon, Milton, Newton, Locke, and Butler, might well be thankful that they were able to point to that constellation of master Spirits, as proving how the highest powers of mind may well consist with the deepest reverence for the revealed Word; and that here at least the weight of intellectual authority was arrayed on the side of Christianity. (Applause.) One more observation and he had done: he was glad to see it would be part of the duty of the committee to engage competent lecturers to bring before them subjects for discussion. That was a most agreeable way of communicating information; he was afraid the present was a fastidious and luxurious, rather than a laborious age, and it was a most agreeable thing to have information communicated by lectures. They were very useful in giving the history of a subject, by showing glimpses, by referring to authorities and sources of information, and bringing in juxta-position old and new opinions; but they must not be relied on beyond a certain point, for whoever would thoroughly master a subject must dig and explore for himself. (Hear, hear.) He had no doubt that in the selection of lecturers the committee would have sometimes a difficult duty to exercise: points would be pressed upon them and subjects brought forward, to the importance of which he had no doubt they were fully alive; and he would take the liberty of suggesting that if among other branches of useful information they could introduce a short course of lectures on agricultural chemistry, he thought the institution would summon a large audience from

the surrounding neighbourhood, and would receive the support of many intelligent cultivators of the soil, who were desirous of receiving information upon a subject so closely connected with their pursuits. (Hear, hear.) He was sure the committee would forgive him for bringing forward this suggestion, which he thought might be the means of procuring many friends to the institution; and without detaining them by further observations, he would at once call upon the Secretary to present his report. (Applause.)

Mr. SAYERS TURNER, in behalf of the Secretary, here read the Committee's report as follows :—

“Your Committee, in presenting a report of their proceedings since the last general meeting, held on the 9th of June, 1848, have reason to congratulate the members on the present position and prospects of the Institution. At that meeting the Committee were authorized to take the necessary steps for carrying out the proposals contained in their report of the 22nd June, having had for their object the purchase of the building then known as Jenkin's Rooms. By the kind and liberal assistance in the shape of loans from numerous friends of the Institution, the purchase has since been completed; and your Committee have the pleasure of stating that the present commodious building, with a garden and dwelling-house adjoining, are now the property of the Institution on very advantageous terms. The property has been conveyed to seven gentlemen, namely—Charles Gray Round, John Bawtree, Jun., William Warwick Hawkins, William Bolton Smith, Sayers Turner, John Taylor, Jun., and Josias Hovel Bryant, who have kindly consented to act as trustees for the Institution. The Committee have thought it advisable to depart from their instructions by making the number of trustees seven instead of six, which they hope will receive the sanction of the members.

“Your Committee have since been occupied in making various alterations and improvements in the premises. They regret that in the course of their various proceedings they have encountered unexpected delays, which have prevented them from placing the rooms at the disposal of the members so soon as they had hoped; they trust, however, that the arrangements now made will be found to provide ample accommodation for all the objects of the Institution. The building contains, in addition to the spacious lecture-room, a reading-room, a library, and two other rooms, available for committees, classes, and other purposes. The lighting of the rooms has received especial attention; and the Committee and the Members are greatly indebted to one of their number (Mr. Sparling) for raising by subscription £12 towards the expense of the gas chandelier in the lecture-room, and for his general exertions in this department of the labours of the Committee.

"The rules for the government of the Institution have been carefully revised, and means have been taken to give the members at large every opportunity of considering them; and your Committee recommend that as soon as the rules are passed they should be submitted to the Barrister appointed to certify the rules of Friendly Societies, for the purpose of obtaining his certificate, in order to the exemption of the building from local rates.

"The number of members reported in May, 1848, was 55, and of associates five. Notwithstanding the imperfect and provisional condition of the society up to even the present time, your Committee have the satisfaction of reporting that the present list of members contains considerably more than double the former numbers—there are now, including honorary subscribers, 140, and 10 associates. Your Committee confidently hope that the advantages which the Institution will henceforth offer, increasing as its plans are brought fully into operation, will speedily cause a larger accession of members. They wish, however, to impress upon the members that the efficiency of the Institution, and the advantages it will afford, will in a great degree depend upon the increased means given by a large body of subscribers; and they strongly urge upon the members the importance to them of their own exertions individually in obtaining an increase of their numbers.

"The library already contains nearly 600 volumes, of which 300 have at different times been presented by friends of the Institution.

"Further donations of books, maps, and scientific apparatus are invited from the members and their friends; and any person who may be disposed to make such contributions are requested to communicate with the Committee through the honorary secretary, Mr. Benham; and, as it is intended shortly to prepare a catalogue of the library, the Committee venture to suggest that the kind intentions of donors should be carried into effect as early as convenient.

"Two classes, assembling weekly, have been already formed, and have been some time in operation; and the members have also certain privileges in attending Mr. Gladwell's singing class. Other classes are contemplated; the formation of a class for any particular study resting principally with the members themselves.

"Your Committee intend to provide for the occasional delivery of lectures on suitable subjects by persons of known reputation; and they have already received several promises of assistance from gentlemen well known in this neighbourhood.

"Upon the subject of financial matters, the Committee have to state that the cost of purchasing the building, the alterations since made, and the requisite furniture and fittings, will more than exhaust the funds placed at their disposal. The amount of the loan already

referred to is £655, and the donations to the present time amount only to about £48. In completing the contemplated arrangements of the Institution, your Committee estimate a deficiency of not more than £100; and they trust that the claims of the Institution to general support will be acknowledged by many who may not yet have contributed to its funds, in such a manner as to prevent any encroachment upon the current income of the year, for purposes of a permanent kind. The ordinary expenditure of the Institution is estimated at a sum which its present income will not be sufficient to meet; but with due exertion on the part of the members, especially in obtaining honorary and other subscribers, your Committee have no doubt of receiving such liberal and extended assistance as will enable them to conduct the affairs of the Institution with that efficiency which its importance would seem to demand.

"The names of the President, Vice-Presidents, and other officers of the Institution, will be submitted to the meeting. The Committee have the pleasure of stating that all the gentlemen referred to have consented to take upon them the offices to which they will be respectively named.

"The Committee recommend the postponement of the election of the Librarian for the present, the arrangements connected with the library not being completed.

"The Committee have constantly received the most encouraging assistance and support from a large body of Clergymen and gentlemen of the neighbourhood; and they feel the high value of the countenance thus given, and to the interest felt in the undertaking.

"The Colchester Literary Institution is now in a condition to commence its career with a fair prospect of success; and, anxious for its permanent prosperity, your Committee would strongly impress upon the members generally, and particularly upon the younger portion of them, the great importance of a strict observance of the rules and regulations of the Institution, and the indispensable necessity of observing the utmost propriety of conduct at all times within its walls, that it may command that confidence and respect which your Committee feel to be essential in order to carry out and secure the object of their labours.

"ARTHUR L. LAING, Chairman of the Committee."

Sir HENRY SMYTH moved the adoption of the report. He wished to identify himself completely with the society, feeling it his bounden duty to do all he could for the advantage of beloved Colchester; and he saw nothing but good that could result from this institution. (Applause.) Besides its moral effect, it would give to young men of intelligent and inquiring

minds the means of improving their capacities, and perhaps of thereby advancing their position in life. He had no doubt very many of this class would become members; and he hoped those who possessed the means would come forward and support the institution in an efficient state. An undertaking of this kind required something of patronage and something also of that important article—money. (Hear, hear.) He was not quite satisfied with the statement of its affairs read by Mr. Turner; and hoped in a short time to see it not only out of debt but with a surplus of funds at command. (Applause.) He rejoiced to have the countenance of the ladies on this occasion, because he knew that wherever their exertions were applied they were always most useful and important; and he hoped they would not let the subject go out of their minds. (Applause.) It had hitherto been perhaps a slur upon the town that it had not a Literary Institution; he hardly knew what his friend the Chairman meant by saying that there was already something of the sort in the town, because, without wishing to enter upon a controversy or anything unpleasant, he was inclined to suspect that the society alluded to was almost a farce. (Hear and laughter.) He was sorry to appear invidious, but at all events he hoped this institution would be infinitely superior to that; and certainly it would be no great difficulty to be so. (Laughter.) As regarded his own feelings towards it, though he had not the power of expressing them as he could wish, the lack of warm-heartedness was never his fault, and as far as his poor means would allow his aid was always at their service. (Applause.)

The MAYOR seconded the resolution with feelings of great pleasure, because he considered this institution had been formed for the benefit of society in the town at large, and not for one class in particular. For his own part, he hoped to derive great benefit from it: there were a vast variety of subjects, the knowledge of which could not be acquired by every man, since each had his peculiar occupation of thought; but here they would be presented in an attractive form, so as to enable them to increase their general stock of information, while they might be, at the same time, following up any favourite study or pursuit. (Applause.) Again, he considered that this society was formed on the best of principles; for intellect and intelligence were of little value unless based upon religion. (Hear, hear.) Aided by an active committee, and supported, as he was sure it would be, by the

purses of those in a higher station, he felt convinced that it must flourish. (Applause.) He wished to impress upon all that it was their bounden duty to come forward to the extent of their means—aye, and beyond their means, in support of an institution like this: it was not enough that many of them enjoyed in their own homes the means of study, and the luxuries of literature; it was their duty to place the same facilities before those who otherwise would not have the opportunity of indulging in them. (Hear, hear.) He was satisfied that this institution would be the means of bringing forward many a budding intellect that would otherwise have wanted nourishment; and of fostering and improving the capabilities of those who had already had some advantages of education. For his own part, he looked forward to many, very many, happy evenings in that room; and it would not be among the least of his gratifications that he should there have an opportunity of meeting all classes and grades of society. (Applause.) He hoped to see both the employer and the employed meeting together in common: the employer would thus see that his servant had a mind and intellect which he was bound to respect; and the employed, on the other hand, would find the heart of his master ever anxious for the furtherance of his good. (Applause.) In this way he was satisfied that this institution would foster that kindly feeling which should ever exist between one class and another. (Applause.)

The Rev. S. CARR said, as a native of the town, he heartily rejoiced at the establishment of an institution like this; had such an one existed when he was a youth, he thought he should have known a great deal more about many matters that he then wished to inquire into than he now did; and much of what little he did know was derived from a somewhat similar institution, though on a smaller scale. They formed a little society among themselves; and to that society he owed, under God, the turn given in his own mind towards anything like literary or higher pursuits; he desired to retain the recollection of the benefits thus afforded him by the society of men far superior to himself; and he earnestly hoped this institution would be the means of bringing forward the minds of many of his fellow-townsmen, and encourage them to those pursuits which would tend to their present improvement, comfort, and advantage; and to secure their best interests here and hereafter. (Applause.) The resolution which had been put into his hands was for the adop-

tion of the rules ; but, without reading them, it would be sufficient to quote the passage stating the objects of the institution, viz. :—

“ To afford to the young men of Colchester an opportunity of acquiring scientific and other useful information, under the sanction of, and in subservience to, religion, in accordance with the principles of the Established Church.”

Such was the basis of their Institution ; had it been of any other character he could have had nothing to do with it. He believed their object would be best promoted by admitting all whom they could receive to be benefited by the institution ; but at the same time requiring that its management should be exclusively in the hands of those who valued religion, who regarded that religion in connexion with our venerable Church, and who were prepared to carry forward the institution upon principles which they believed to be for the best interests of the country. If such were to be its principles, then he would say, in the language he was accustomed to use every day at college—*Floreat Domus*—God bless the Colchester Literary Institution. (Applause.) Considering the business still remaining, he would not inflict a speech upon them to-night, but, if he might take the liberty of mentioning it, he would venture one of these days, should life be spared, to give an amateur lecture in that room. (Applause.) His would be indeed a “ ‘prentice hand ;” such a thing he never undertook before, but he should be happy to make the attempt, from a feeling that every man was bound to do what he could to promote the welfare and best interests of his neighbours ; and he hoped there were many far better calculated for the task who would readily follow his example. (Applause.)

The Rev. J. PAPILLON seconded the resolution, observing that he had carefully read through the rules, and could therefore conscientiously recommend them as admirably calculated for the purpose they had in view. He congratulated the members upon the happy circumstance of holding their first meeting within walls which were the property of the Institution ; and he trusted those walls would be as witnesses to all who might be entrusted with the carrying out of the rules, to remind them that the object which its founders had in view was the promotion of sound knowledge and intellectual cultivation of a proper character. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. BAWTREE said the Institution which was to date

its beginning from this evening was one which seemed to put forth a very strong claim to the support and encouragement of every well-wisher to the town of Colchester. Happily for himself and other speakers on this occasion, the Chairman had gone so fully into the claims and merits of the society, and so ably and eloquently pointed out the benefits to be expected from it, that he had left him little room to say much and scarcely occasion to say anything. Before, however, he proceeded to the immediate object with which he rose to address them, he must express his unqualified approval of the Institution, and his confident belief that much good would be derived from it. Its object was to provide the means and opportunity of intellectual improvement for the inhabitants of Colchester, more especially the younger portion, and to infuse among them a taste for literary and scientific objects, the tendency of which was to draw off the mind from low and grovelling pursuits, and to direct it to the acquirement of what was good and useful and ennobling. Centuries had elapsed since learning was confined almost exclusively to the cloister and the cell; but to mark the contrast between the state of learning in what were emphatically called the dark ages of the world and its condition at the present time was most striking and wonderful; in fact nothing was more extraordinary to contemplate than the rapid advancement of philosophy and science, and the almost universal extension of knowledge. Whether that diffusion be for good or for evil was a consideration and an inquiry deserving the attention of every reflecting mind. That it might prove for good must mainly depend upon the faithful and diligent dissemination of the truths of the everlasting Gospel; and next, he humbly conceived, under the Divine blessing, upon the direction given to the reading, studies, and the literary pursuits of the rising generation; therefore it was with unmingled satisfaction that he observed this institution was to be conducted in connexion with, under the sanction of, and in subservience to, religion, in accordance with the principles of the Church of England. This, he was persuaded, was the best guarantee which could be given that the poisonous trash of the infidel and the demagogue would not be allowed to disgrace the reading-room table, or their more bulky publications to contaminate the shelves of its library. (Applause.) With our venerable Church for its nursing mother—with a committee made up, as he had no doubt it would be, of men of discretion and discernment—with

Wisdom holding her steady lamp to light it on its way, he entertained a confident hope and expectation that this Literary Institution would prove a real blessing to the town, and that its younger inhabitants more especially would have occasion to congratulate themselves upon so fair an opportunity being afforded them for the cultivation of their minds. (Applause.) In looking round to find a president for their infant institution, under whose fostering care it might be ushered into life, he did not think it possible that they could do better than fix upon Colchester's oldest friend and most faithful servant, Sir George Henry Smyth. (Much applause.) A resident for 30 years within the sound of their church bells; for 20 of those years their representative in the House of Commons; attached as they knew him to be to all their institutions, and ever anxious to promote their local interests, Sir Henry enjoyed a kind of prescriptive right to be placed at the head of a society of so much interest and importance to the town as a Literary Institution. (Applause.) Under these circumstances, and as his own friendship and acquaintance with the honourable baronet commenced when he (Mr. Bawtree) was a mere stripling, and had continued with undiminished warmth to the present hour, it was a task very grateful to his feelings to be allowed to nominate Sir Henry Smyth to fill the office of President. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. H. G. DEANE seconded the resolution, which was carried by acclamation.

Dr. WILLIAMS proposed that the following gentlemen be Vice-Presidents of the Institution :—Charles G. Round, Esq., John Bawtree, Esq., Geo. Round, Esq., Rev. S. Carr, Rev. J. T. Round, Rev. John Papillon, and Dr. Maclean.

Mr. JOHN BAWTREE, jun., in seconding the resolution, said the only ground upon which he presumed to appear before this numerous assembly was that of affection for his native town. Colchester, he considered, claimed the regard of her sons in a very high degree, and had many associations connected with it not possessed by other towns. Walking on either side, must they not say she was a fair town to look upon?—in respect of public buildings was she not fairly adorned? and as regarded her antiquities and historic associations, she was rich indeed. He would only allude to two points which

struck him forcibly in connexion with her historic associations; he could stand upon the stone in the Castle Bailey, where loyal men of old had died in virtue of the highest cause that man could fight for; and he could point to the tablet that recorded how martyrs within its crumbling walls had testified to Jesus in the flames. (Applause.) These, he thought, gave Colchester a claim to rank high among the towns and cities of their native land; and standing thus in her ancient relics, surely she ought not in modern times to be backward in the establishment of an institution which by common consent was calculated to confer benefit upon all classes of the community. After some further observations Mr. Bawtree concluded by seconding the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

The Rev. L. W. OWEN moved the appointment of the following gentlemen as Trustees of the Institution:—C. G. Round, Esq., W. W. Hawkins, Esq., John Bawtree, jun., Esq., W. B. Smith, Esq., Sayers Turner, Esq., Mr. J. H. Bryant, and Mr. John Taylor, jun. The reverend gentlemen expressed his regret at the announcement that there was some deficiency of funds; it was gratifying, however, to be able to meet in their own room; they had a *status*, and he felt such perfect confidence in the principles of the institution, and the way in which they would commend themselves to the public, that he had no doubt that by the end of the financial year their exchequer would be in a very flourishing condition. (Applause.)

Mr. F. SMYTHIES seconded the resolution, and congratulated his fellow townsmen upon the establishment of an institution likely to be so valuable an acquisition to the town.

Mr. JOHN BROWN, of Stanway, proposed the following gentlemen as the General Committee for the ensuing year, viz.,—Mr. Laurance Brock, Mr. G. B. Clark, Dr. Duncan, Mr. Laing, Mr. Parris, Mr. John Taylor, jun., Mr. Josias Bryant, Mr. Frost, Mr. John Lay, Mr. Rickword, Mr. Thomas Scott, Mr. William Sparling, Mr. John Coppin, Mr. Harwood, Mr. Henry Lufkin, jun., Mr. Rudkin, Mr. Skrimshire, and Mr. John Slaney. He (Mr. Brown) had had the pleasure of assisting at the foundation of several institutions of this nature; and he was firmly of opinion that in places where the different branches of natural history were cultivated they had a safe and firm basis, and were sure to flourish. They had a neighbourhood full of objects of

the highest interest in the department of natural history; and classes might readily be formed for the study of conchology and zoology; to say nothing of the fossils with which, as his own little experience enabled him to testify, Colchester was surrounded. (Applause.)

The resolution was seconded by Mr. NUNN, and agreed to.

Mr. BOLTON SMITH was happy to testify his approval of the object upon which they were met, by moving the election of the chief officers of the institution, viz., Mr. Bryant, as Treasurer; Messrs. J. Pattison and E. F. Good, as Auditors; and Mr. Edward Benham as Honorary Secretary, a post which the latter gentleman had filled for some time, with a degree of diligence and devotion which entitled him to the best thanks of the members. (Applause.)

Mr. LAURANCE BROCK seconded the resolution, which having been carried,

Mr. BENSLY adverted to the labours and services of the Committee; and proposed that a cordial vote of thanks be presented to them.

The CHAIRMAN said of course the Committee could not originate such a resolution; but Mr. Bensly's observations were most pertinent and proper; and he was sure the meeting would, by acclamation, convey their acknowledgments to the Committee. (Applause.)

Mr. LAING, as chairman of the Committee, acknowledged the compliment. It would be affectation in him to disclaim any merit as belonging to the Committee, because he must say that, as a body, they had had to go through a great deal. The purchase and alteration of the building, and the arrangements of the present meeting, had been attended with no small trouble; but being actuated one and all with the greatest singleness of purpose, and a happy unanimity of opinion, they had arrived at their present state, and might, he thought, with good reason, be proud of the result of their efforts. (Applause.) The compliment paid to the Committee was extremely gratifying; and in their behalf he begged to thank both Mr. Bensly and the meeting.

The CHAIRMAN said he had now the pleasure of introducing the gentleman who had promised to favour them with an address on the occasion. (Much applause.)

Mr. SAYERS TURNER said he might well feel gratified that the little part allotted him to play embraced the pleasing duty of proposing a vote of thanks to their kind friend Mr. Donne for his very able and eloquent lecture. (Applause.) He imagined the feeling of the meeting to be like his own—"much would have more"—and he had strong hope that ere long Mr. Donne would again favour them as he had done that evening. (Hear, hear.) The resolution which he had to submit, and which he anticipated would be one of the most unanimous of their proceedings, was that a vote of thanks be presented to William Bodham Donne, Esq., for his well-considered, most instructive, and most appropriate address. (Much applause.)

The Rev. W. M. TUCKER seconded the proposition; and it was carried by acclamation.

The Rev. W. Y. SMYTHIES was happy to have been entrusted with a resolution which could not suffer from any feeble advocacy on his part, because it spoke for itself. It was "that the thanks of the meeting were eminently due to Charles Gray Round, Esq., for his kindness in presiding." (Applause.) A great kindness it doubtless was; for though the committee had got through their main difficulties—though this our Literary Institution—our Literary Lady—our Minerva of Colchester, had made her *début*, they must bear in mind—and he appealed to the ladies if it were not so—that she could not have made her appearance in public with propriety, and certainly not with such great success, without some one in the light of a chaperon to take her by the hand and introduce her to their notice—some one whose position and character might be at once a guarantee for her excellence and do honour to his charge; and one, too, whose affability might render it not an unpleasing office to himself. Such a one, he conceived, had been found in the gentleman who had so kindly and so ably occupied the chair that evening; and most sincerely did he hope that this institution might do honour not only to his patronage and presidency, but also to that of any other gentleman who might in future give it their countenance and support. (Applause.) He had called the institution "our Minerva of Colchester;" and though

the term might be a fanciful one he would not retract. Let the fabled goddess be her prototype, and that beautiful allegory her guide. Minerva, they were told, sprang forth all armed from out the head of Jove: thus even the heathen owned that wisdom came from God; and might our Minerva, too, in the teaching she allowed within her walls, never lose sight of the Divine fountain of all wisdom—the one great Source of light. (Applause.) As a native of this town, though an unwilling exile from her walls, he could not forbear expressing his gratification at the event of this day. They had witnessed the dawn of an institution which had no unimportant mission to perform among the minds around; and woe betide her if she betray her trust—God speed her if she perform it well. (Applause.) Let her grasp with a generous, free, and thankful hand the startling phenomena which modern science offered to the view; but look with wary and suspicious eye on those deductions from them which seemed to savour, however slightly, of infidelity or scepticism; as well as on those bright and brilliant fallacies which were too apt in these days unwarrantably to assume the garb and usurp the sacred name of truth. Happily, on the present occasion, they had had nothing to fear from such sources as these, but had passed a most delightful and instructive evening: and yet, without knowing it, perhaps they had been nigh encountering some perils wherein they should have found the advantage of a chairman. Who could tell, for instance, had their lecturer been a man of boundless fancy, that he might not have carried them deep into the bowels of the earth—the caverns of the elder world, and there left them to wander amidst the broken strata of the olden time, meeting every now and then with some grim ghost of the huge Mammoth, or the mighty Megatherium: or coming suddenly round a corner on some of those very odd fish—the Ichthyosauri—(laughter)—then should they have needed their chairman to call the lecturer to order and bid him bring them back from those antediluvian scenes to this work-a-day world once more. Or, again, he might have wafted them far aloft among the planetary orbs—much beyond even the man in the moon (who as an old friend they might have no objection to visit)—(laughter)—but far, far beyond the stars themselves, where their friends could not find them even with a telescope—(renewed laughter)—and taken them to search for nebulae or what not in the wide realms of space; and perhaps have left them there bewildered, but that they could have begged their chairman kindly to insist on his

turning the *peg* of his Pegasus to bring them down again. (Laughter and applause.) He feared, were he (Mr. Smythies) to enlarge further, he too might be called to order; and as the resolution needed no recommendation from him, nor could the object of it derive any additional lustre from his praises, he would simply leave it in their hands, feeling assured it would not meet with a single dissentient. (Applause.)

Mr. S. G. COOKE heartily seconded the resolution, expressing his great personal respect for the Chairman, and his conviction that they could not have found a man more qualified for the post or better able to take the lead in a matter of this kind.

The vote having been carried by acclamation,

The CHAIRMAN said this was perhaps the only motion that need not have been made; though he was, nevertheless, extremely obliged to them for their kindness; but he trusted they would believe him when he said that he had had great pleasure in attending their meeting. They had indeed passed a most agreeable and instructive evening—the augury, he trusted, of many such; and he could only add that he hoped the day would never come when he should be unwilling to assist in what he believed to be the best interests of the good old town of Colchester. (Applause.)

The company then separated.

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